

The Utah Department of Health exists to protect the public's health through preventing illness, injury, disability, and premature death, assuring access to necessary health care and promoting healthy lifestyles. In the practice of public health, it has become clear that communities can provide key resources in achieving those goals. Individual health is closely linked to community health and the environment, which is why the vision of the nation's Healthy People 2010 initiative has been coined, "Healthy People in Healthy Communities."¹ In addition, community involvement in the planning and implementation of public health interventions brings an understanding of the community history and social context that is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of a public health intervention.

Health differences exist across communities. Although the causes are varied they often accompany differences in income, education, behavior, and urban versus rural living. Regardless of what may underlie the differences, it is important to identify and address the critical health issues that face each community and provide useful health status information to local organizations that serve these communities and neighborhoods.

This report examines the health status of communities at the smallest possible level of geography that the data will allow and, depending on the measure, is reported for a small area, the local health district, or the state. Reporting at a local level will allow public health officials and community leaders to address the specific health issues that confront their neighborhoods and help to inform their decisions on interventions that best address the problem.

National and state health objectives served as a starting point for selecting the 42 measures that appear in this report, and the following sources helped to inform our decisions.

- Healthy People 2000 Health Status Indicators
- Healthy People 2010 Leading Health Indicators
- HRSA/ASTHO/Public Health Foundation Community Health Status Indicator Project
- Utah's Public Health Outcome Measures Report
- Utah Indicators of Child Health and Well-Being

Additionally we were guided by the desire to select a set of indicators that:

- are broad in public health relevance,
- are few in number,
- provide a comprehensive view of community health,
- allow for reporting of data at the community level,
- have data from sources for which state and national benchmarks are available,
- are understandable and acceptable, and
- are outcome-oriented measures that imply interventions.

The list was compiled and finalized after soliciting input from scholars, public health officials, representatives of local community organizations, and others.

Subject matter experts in programs throughout the Utah Department of Health participated in reporting and interpreting the data for each of the community health indicators included in this report. The UDOH also intends to routinely update and publish community health indicator information on the Indicator-Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS-PH) website (<http://ibis.health.utah.gov>) whenever new data are available. We invite readers to think about health promotion priorities in their communities while using this report as a guide. We also recommend contacting state and community health programs for more comprehensive information. The UDOH program contact information for each indicator is found at the bottom of each report page.